

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY DENOUNCES REPUBLICAN SALE OF PROTECTED LANDS: ‘BUY ONE ARCTIC REFUGE -- WE’LL EVEN THROW IN THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF FOR FREE!’

Washington, D.C. –Today House Republicans approved a bill that will expedite drilling in the Arctic Refuge and ease any drilling projects on the outer continental shelf (OCS). Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Resources Committee blasted the plan for jeopardizing wilderness areas across the country, after offering two amendments to strike these destructive provisions that permit drilling in the Arctic Refuge and end the moratorium on drilling in the outer continental shelf.

“Even the Bush Administration's own Energy Information Association studies reveal that **DRILLING IN THE ARCTIC REFUGE WILL NOT REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL,**” said Rep. Ed Markey.

“Republicans want the public to believe that we need to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge because we need to take action to alleviate our country's energy problems, but the Bush Administration's own figures show that **WE WON’T SEE A DROP OF OIL FROM THE REFUGE FOR 10 YEARS.**”

“It has been argued that letting the oil companies drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will reduce gas prices. But the Bush Administration's own figures show that **TEN YEARS FROM NOW THIS MIGHT REDUCE GAS PRICES BY ABOUT ONE CENT!**”

“Allowing big oil companies to get their hands on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or land on the Outer Continental Shelf will not help lower gas prices or the cost to heat your home in the winter for ten years. This is not a solution to the crush that the American people are feeling now,” said Markey who offered amendments to strike Section E of the bill to prevent drilling in ANWR.

Authorizing drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would represent a colossal shift in the precedent governing our entire wildlife refuge system. Since the adoption of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, drilling has been considered to be incompatible with the purpose of our national wildlife refuge system – the conservation of our nation’s wildlife. According to GAO, since 1966, oil companies have never been allowed to drill on refuge lands except where private mineral rights pre-dated the establishment of the refuge or where public resources were being siphoned off by private companies on neighboring lands.

Rep. Markey continued, “The reality is that the Republican leaders are continuing to give America a false choice. We do not have to choose between drilling in our national preserved lands or being at the mercy of oil from the Middle East. This push for drilling in the Arctic Refuge and the OCS is completely unnecessary when we could save oil by simply improve the average fuel economy of cars, minivans and SUV's.”

“We shouldn’t continue to pump oil at a breakneck pace into increasingly inefficient vehicles and devices. But the Republican Congress continues to forgo reducing our dependency on foreign oil through conservation and technological advances, preferring instead to create more slick drilling schemes for their Big Oil friends. Republicans are sending a clear message to Americans across the country that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is for sale, the outer continental shelf is for sale, and just wait and see which of the 544 refuges or other public lands are next,” said Rep. Markey.

Forcing drilling into the Arctic Refuge would effectively repeal the protections afforded by the 1966 Refuge Act, setting a precedent that would allow Congress and the oil companies to select any of the other 544 refuges as the next target.

For more information on Representative Markey’s work to protect endangered species and wildlife check out: <http://www.house.gov/markey/>.

